

29hh- What Is Wisdom?

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(A Summarised Transcription of a Hillside Hermitage Dhamma Talk)

Q: What is discernment or wisdom?

Nm: It's knowing the Nature of things, knowing things in their Nature. That doesn't mean gathering up or retaining information about things, that's on the level of intelligence, which can help, for example, with getting some information about where or how to look for the Nature of a present experience, Nature of feelings, Nature of perception, Nature of suffering, Nature of things that matter. Wisdom is not dependent on a high degree of intelligence or vast amounts of information storage, but by the right effort you put towards discerning the Nature of things that matter. People are born with different degrees of intelligence, but wisdom is developed, through effort, restraint, calming of your mind, or not giving into craving and desires- the "corruptions of the mind and weakeners of wisdom".

Q: What is the Nature of things?

Nm: Things differ in their particular nature, but universally, they share the same Nature. For example, the Nature of all *sankharas*/determinations is *anicca*/subject to change and *dukkha*/unsatisfactory, and the Nature of all *dhammas*/things, is *anatta*/they cannot be owned, they cannot be yours, they don't belong to you, they are there and you can use them, but you're making a grave error in maintaining your assumption of ownership in regard to them. That's the root of all the problems. It's not the usage of things, it's the assumption of ownership that you maintain on that mental level. That's the Nature you want to be concerned about. As in, you can investigate other natures, but that's all relative, you want to come to the root, the 'Nature of all things', which is impermanence, unsatisfactory, and cannot be yours. That's all that really matters.

Noble wisdom or discernment takes you beyond things, you're no longer affected by them. You cannot be accessed by them. Why? Because you have removed that assumption of ownership which was based on *avijja*/ignorance. If you fully understand that things are not yours, you will no longer be emotionally affected by what happens to them. That is wisdom. That is elevation of the mind, which means a greater perspective on things. All the decisions that intelligent and non-intelligent people make in their life, is based upon the height or degree of their perspective. The greater the perspective, the wiser they become. They might not necessarily be ultimately wise and know the way out of suffering, but they're certainly wiser in relation to those who have no perspective, who are just like animals, slaves to their senses and sense desires, overwhelmed and absorbed into sensual perceptions. So that's another way you can describe wisdom - it's the height of your perspective. The higher the wisdom, the less of an emotional involvement with things you have, which means that the ultimate wisdom is the complete surmounting and detachment from feelings and suffering.